



C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER
GOVERNOR

February 24, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania, Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I join my fellow governors in strongly opposing the potential cuts to the Army National Guard advocated by the U.S. Army's fiscal 2015 budget request.

For more than a decade, our National Guard has demonstrated it is a cost-effective operational force that is critical to our national security at home and abroad.

As commanders-in-chief, we appreciate the need to reorganize, restructure and modernize the military to meet new threats and economic realities. All sectors of the military need to be involved in meeting the targets set by the Budget Control Act of 2011 and the realities of having fewer forces engaged abroad. In doing so, however, the Army Guard's operational capabilities and 350,000 personnel strength level must be preserved. The Army's proposed cuts suggest a pre-2001 strategic reserve construct.

Governors are extremely proud of the role that the National Guard plays in protecting this nation and its citizens. The modern National Guard is a highly experienced and capable combat force and an essential state partner in responding to domestic disasters and emergencies. A return to a pre-9/11 role squanders the investment and value of the Guard and discredits its accomplishments at home and as an active combat force.

Two years ago we opposed similar efforts to dramatically cut personnel and equipment from the Air National Guard. Congress subsequently chose not to impose the cuts and called for a National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force. That commission recently concluded that the Guard is a cost-effective and invaluable force that should be a critical component of the total force structure. The Commission's conclusions and the ongoing Army debate strengthen the case for a similar independent review of the Army's future force structure and active and reserve component mix.

We respectfully request that you reconsider proposed cuts to the Army National Guard and changes to the Guard's combat aviation capabilities, and that you work with us to fashion solutions that provide a scalable, cost-effective force that best serves the interests of our nation.

As Always – Idaho, "Esto Perpetua"

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "C.L. Butch Otter".

C.L. "Butch" Otter
Governor of Idaho